


Saved by a Steel Toe

By AT3 Keith Lightner

My squadron was selected for a surprise fire drill. SOP for such operations is to prepare any aircraft inside the hangar for a quick move, if needed. I was pushing a B-2 stand out of the hangar and walking as fast as I could, and one of the wheels hit a pad eye in the tarmac. You can guess what happened.

Instead of turning off course or just jostling me a bit, the stand balked, and, big as it is, the entire back end bucked a few inches into the air. As the stand lifted, one of its four dinner-plate-sized immobilizing jacks lashed out like a giant horse's hoof and headed straight at my right foot.

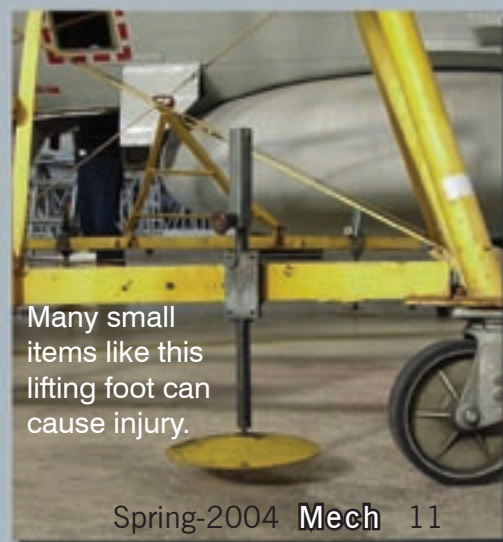
Fortunately, I was wearing my steel-toed maintenance boots that day, and the right boot took all the damage. The edge of the steel disk nearly skinned off all the leather from the top of the boot's toe, leaving a patch dangling by a shred. It even left a noticeable dent in the steel beneath the leather. If I'd been wearing any less foot protection that day, I probably would have suffered a serious injury. I possibly could have lost a toe or two. Because of my boots, I was able to walk to the safety office after the fire drill was over, give my statement, have photos taken of my boot, and get reminded of how lucky I was. The Navy insists that maintainers wear steel-toed boots, so a professional decision is not luck. I hope you make the same choice. 

Petty Officer Lightner works in the AT shop at VQ-1.



The gouge in this boot wouldn't make most people smile.

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Many small items like this lifting foot can cause injury.

